

REMARKS

Claims 8-10, 15-16, 20-27, and 29-30 are now pending in the application. Claims 1-7, 11-14, 17-19, 28, and 31-34 are cancelled herein. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 14 and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. (JP 2002-182199) in view of Sekiguchi (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0054261). Claim 4 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. and Sekiguchi in view of Hedrick (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0160740). Claims 5 and 6 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. in view of Ogasawara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,592,314). Claim 7 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. in view of Nonomura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,335,936). Claim 18 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. in view of Yamahara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,163,354). Claim 19 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. in view of Takase (JP 09/090357).

Claims 1-7, 14, 18-19, and 34 have been cancelled. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejections of these claims have been rendered moot.

Claims 9-10 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. in view of Tsuji (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0128316).

Applicant notes that the Tsuji application has a U.S. filing date of December 30, 2002. In contrast, the present application claims priority to JP 2002-196458, filed July 4, 2002. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the present application has a

priority date of July 4, 2002, which is before the U.S. filing date of the Tsuji application. To perfect priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, Applicants submit herewith an English language translation of JP 2002-196458 and a statement of accuracy regarding the translation.

Because the Tsuji application's U.S. filing date is after the priority date of the present application under 35 U.S.C. § 119, Applicants submit that the Tsuji application can not be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) against the present application. As such, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 9-10 would not have been obvious.

Claims 15 and 16 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. in view of Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,136,406). Claims 20-23 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. and Kato et al. in view of Sekiguchi. Claim 24 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al., Kato et al. and Sekiguchi in view of Hedrick. Claims 25 and 26 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. and Kato et al. in view of Ogasawara et al. Claim 27 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. and Kato et al. in view of Nonomura et al. Claims 29 and 30 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Nishino et al. and Kato et al. in view of Tsuji.

Claim 15 is amended herein to include the subject matter formerly of claim 28. As explained below, for at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 15 is not obvious in view of the references.

Claims 16, 20-27, and 29-30 depend on claim 15 and, therefore, for at least the same reasons, should also be patentable.

Furthermore, claims 29-30 are rejected in view of the Tsuji application. As explained above with reference to claims 9-10, Applicants submit that the present application has a priority date before the U.S. filing date of the Tsuji application and,

therefore, that that the Tsuji application can not be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) against the present application. Accordingly, for these additional reasons, Applicants submit that claims 29-30 would not have been obvious.

Applicants, therefore, respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claim 8 has been allowed. Applicants respectfully thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration of claim 8.

The Examiner states that claim 28 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 15 to include the subject matter of claim 28. Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 15 should now be in condition for allowance.


CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner

believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 31, 2006

By: 
G. Gregory Schivley
Reg. No. 27,382
Bryant E. Wade
Reg. No. 40,344

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

GGs/BEW/DWH/lf-s